

Blood into Ink

The Chimes, 117th Issue



SINCE 1879

SHORTER UNIVERSITY

CHIMES



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Kingfisher, Anna Roberts



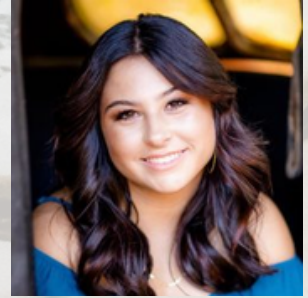
Founded in 1873, Shorter University is a Christ-centered, four-year liberal arts university committed to excellence in education. U.S. News & World Report and The Princeton Review annually include Shorter on their lists of Best Southeastern Colleges. The university offers traditional bachelor's degrees in 40 areas of study, online courses and degree programs, undergraduate programs for working adults, and associate's and master's programs. Learn more at www.shorter.edu.

The Chimes Mission Statement

The Chimes, Shorter University's student-produced arts and literature magazine, publishes works from student, faculty, alumni, and external submitters in a variety of different mediums. We hold that God as the Creator has bestowed upon us the gift of the creative process in order to produce art that glorifies Him. Our mission is to foster quality poetry, prose, and art that expresses the beauty of the creative gift.

Chimes Staff

Shelby Dobson, Magazine Designer. Shelby was born and raised in Rome, GA. She is currently a senior at Shorter and wishes to become a nail technician after graduation. She has been on the Chimes staff for three years and is grateful for time she was able to spend with these remarkable people!



Lucas Durand, Nonfiction Editor. Lucas is a senior Communications Studies major and Christian Studies minor at Shorter University. He writes occasionally, reads sporadically, sings recreationally, and gives glory to God to the best of his ability.

Taliyah Ford, Visual Arts Editor. Taliyah was homeschooled and raised in a military family, traveling all over the US before settling down in Georgia. She loves cooking, acting, and creative writing! She can also be found curled up with her favorite novel: *The Grip Of It* by Jac Jemc, or any of the Narnia novels. She is so excited to be part of the Chimes!



Hanna Lewis, Social Media Manager. Hanna Lewis is a junior English and Communications double major from Chatsworth, Georgia. She graduated from Murray County High School in Chatsworth. Her favorite book is *Looking for Alaska* by John Green. When Hanna is not writing, she is helping with the Shorter Pep Band and the Shorter Art League. She is excited to be on the Chimes staff!

Caroline Minucci, Poetry Editor and Magazine Designer. Caroline is a senior English major and has loved being on the Chimes staff! She writes poetry and creative nonfiction, mostly inspired by the Holy Spirit, nature, and the British Romantics. When she isn't writing, Caroline can be found drinking tea, yapping about books with her friends, or frolicking in a field with her husband.



Chimes Staff



Dr. Poussin, Faculty Advisor. Dr. P is in his eleventh year as advisor to The Chimes. Avid photographer, he dabbles in poetry and has published five collections of poems as well as thousands of poems and photographs in a number of magazines in the United States and abroad. Although it is likely impossible, his curiosity seeks answers that may reveal the universe's secrets to him through the arts. Most of all, he does not take himself seriously.

Anna Roberts, Editor-in-Chief. Anna Roberts is a senior English major and is excited to be featured in the Chimes! Her writing is frequently inspired by British writers and nature. When she is not writing or reading, she can be found baking sourdough bread, showing her friends her favorite poems, and taking many woodland walks.



George Sifuentes, Magazine Staff. George is a former Computer Information Systems Major, with a minor in Graphic Design from Rome, GA. Sci-Fi and RPGs are how he spends his time when he's not working on his vehicles. As an Army Veteran, he's honored to be able to work with this staff.

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Letter from the Editors

“All of us, gazing with unveiled face on the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, as from the Lord who is the Spirit.”

-1 Corinthians 3:18

We the staff are pleased to present to you the 111th issue of The Chimes Literary and Arts Magazine. This year's theme was “Blood into Ink,” a reference to a T.S. Eliot quote about writing. For us, it means turning one’s unique lived experience into art that inspires, challenges, and most of all displays the imago Dei in each of us. The journey of transformation that we as humans undergo is filled with both sweetness and bitterness, and we believe that all of these moments can be a source of hope or comfort for others in that they reflect the Holy Spirit shining through children of God. When these emotions spill out as art, they can become beautiful, relatable, even transformative for the readers. If you take something away from this issue, let it be this: just as Christ’s blood was shed for a beautiful purpose, so our sufferings and longings can be united to His and renewed into something with meaning.

A Poet at Loggerheads

In my craft or sullen art

Exercised in the still night -Dylan Thomas

Whenever inspiration runs dry,
words skid across the chicane of a run-on
line and crash into each other. Flames
spread, fatalities abound, and the wounded
cry out for the gurney of a turn of phrase
to rush in through the fog of the last stanza.

When first aid fails, I wheel the poem
into the dimly-lit theatre of my mind,
strap it down, and press the paddles

to its chest. One, two, three—
the words foam and sputter. Sometimes,
I cut away a ruptured metaphor,

amputate a foot— quick or light.
If the poem still dies, I'll bury it
in the graveyard of the ink-blotched page,

and return daily with a bouquet
of improvements. Then, at night,
I will wait for it to climb out of its grave

and terrorize me in my sleep.

-Sambuhu Ramachandran

While man was still asleep,

the Lord breathed and, alone,
she was made alive.

she breathed the first breaths of womankind
to the very bottom of her lungs,

stood in the mud, barefoot, and felt his wet foundations between her toes
as the gentle breeze brushed aside her dark curls,

and shared in the near-silent intimacy
of Father and newborn child.

“my God,” she called in a soft voice
and He answered her.

for a few moments, in the solitude
of being surrounded by all life—

to where, she did not ask—
she walked with the Lord,

content only to know
that she was striding alongside Him.

-Sarah Watkins

Frankie

I'm not going to say his name, but he was in pain
I could tell he was in pain even though I couldn't see his eyes
through his sunglasses, didn't register the limp until he moved.
There was a wave of anger and pain every time he sighed
most of the time I thought it was directed at me.

There are birds inside all of us struggling to break free
in poetry, or song, or through bright swaths of paint
some of us have stronger birds inside of us
than those of other people, and while that sounds
magical and wonderful, it's not. It's better to be filled with sparrows
that will never find the strength to rip free

than to be filled with creatures vital enough to be felt
all of the time, powerful enough
to break through one's skin and fly free at any given moment
leaving nothing but the hollowed-out shell of a shattered human being
in their wake.

-Holly Day



Myanmar
-Betty Poussin

Marginal Voices

Bunnies bow-hunting humans;
men racing snails, lances
lowered to spear dogs;
what prompted scribes
to ink such absurdities?
Was it the rote boredom
of copying ad nauseum
the Word, its power lost
after so many echoes?
Whose soul could tremble
as did Moses on the Mount
at the 2,000th “yea” or “nay”
scrawled by an aching wrist?
One can see the monks’ eyes
fighting sleep with filigreed
sacrilege in marginalia. . .
the wise owls’ and asses’ mischief
appears childish in this fief
of kings. Who can say what
art moves the straying hand?
In the quiet, candle-lit
hours, each drawing speaks
in a still small voice, signals
of mystery known only
to the rebel hearts that listen.

-Benjamin Thorne

Ten Thousand Stitches

Once I met a boy with brown eyes.

His hair curled, and he could run like the wind. The worry lines on his forehead couldn't hide the smile ones around his eyes, and he gave hugs that wrapped you like a blanket, and sometimes he smelt faintly of tobacco.

There was something about him that made me want to stop hiding and give instead, to face my fear like it was a warm south wind. And so when he started talking about how he needed a sweater for winter, I didn't think twice about throwing off my safety blanket and pulling out my hooks and yarn.

I'm not an expert at the finer points of crochet, not by any means. I made up half of my pattern as I went along, stumbling over mistakes in the instructions and then changing to what I thought would work best instead. But I turned the soft, shapeless string into something with solid form, each row made of hundreds of little loops, ten thousand stitches turning into a dark brown sweater.

The desire to return warmth for warmth spurred me to creativity, and within that, I found the need for perseverance. I know how to crochet like the back of my hand, but the effort it takes to make something so big, the care needed for something so important, was something I didn't realize before. It wasn't just for fun; it was real, and it took intent.

A single loose thread pulled can undo something entirely, but I built that sweater from the ground up, from a single slipknot and a row of chain stitches. I wove it together so that the Fates themselves, even having cut the thread, couldn't have undone it. And I wove the boy into myself, around my bones; I threaded him between my ribs and wrapped him tightly around my heart. I don't believe in the invisible string—we have to look for it ourselves and choose to pick up the end; having chosen, we must follow it into the labyrinth, walk into the darkness knowing we might never get out. And I surprised myself: I hunted down the cracks in myself and filled them with love until I was so entwined with it that I couldn't escape, and I didn't want to.

As I crocheted the sweater together, the yarn got tangled like vines around a tree trunk and I had to cut it, pruning away the messy parts and straightening them out to piece them back together. I had to pull out rows that had taken hours to start again and make them better. When I ran out of yarn, I had to tie it to a new skein and keep going, praying that he wouldn't mind the knots, tucking in the ends to make sure the gaps didn't matter. And sometimes, I had to ignore my wild urge to pull it all apart when I noticed a single missing stitch; I learned that it's only easy to love something imperfect when the flaws are not your own. My relentless repetition was not enough by itself; I had to do

something gentler, trust that he would love the work for the work I put into it.

After I finished the sweater, whip-stitching the seams together in neat rows, I added one more thing, because a finished piece is sedentary—without care, once it stops coming together it can start falling apart. Beyond the ugliness of its flaws and my desire to reject my own failings was the fear of unraveling. Putting everything into this piece with the knowledge that it could still fall apart in the end. But the hours and late nights I spent on it pushed beyond that fear into the idea that maybe, just maybe, the end result would be a gift worth keeping, even if the parts I tied together might one day start to fray. All that work meant that maybe I had what it took to keep working, to mend it every time I needed to. So, after I finished, I crocheted a tiny heart, only fifteen stitches, in the same brown as the sweater, the same brown as his eyes, and sewed it onto the back of the sweater's left sleeve. Because in the end, I don't believe there was a destiny tying our little fingers together. I don't believe in Fates who can snip the thread on a whim whenever doubt comes in. I worked to weave every little bit of my eight skeins into something coherent, something intentional, because even the best I could offer would still be flawed; even the most tightly woven sweater will start to fray, but with that heart on the sleeve, I remember the diligence and strength I need and have, and I remind us both that this is not a finished piece. It is one that will stay in motion, being worn and mended and worn again, for as long as he wants it to; it's one that I will stitch together every time it frays, even if all ten thousand stitches fall apart. I will pull them back together and spend ten thousand more days with him.

-Caroline Mirucci



Dragonfly
-Taliyah Ford

Certain Butchery

What were the love letters you gave me made of, I never got to ask
Butcher paper, maybe. You liked to paint vignettes of men and meat
Were you warning me of my fate before you chopped me up?

I didn't keep them, but I have photos in the dossier
And the emails you sent later. Remember those?
I look at them side by side, it's more forensic than sorrowful

Your emails have a bite, a pulse, a curdle. I feel your hatred for me
I watch it pool through the cracks of my screen and use
Every last bit of reason I own to sop up it up

But your letters, your handwriting, it's so beautiful, why
Are they so brief, the ink so measured and withholding?
The words don't bleed off the paper and leave me gasping
The way your emails do.

-Megan Samsel



Indonesia

-Betty Poussin

How West Virginians Talk

Sometimes it feels like my pronunciation
is parked on the berm of your understanding,
like the way you look at me as if I broke the law
when I say the river's name, but it's not
"KAN-uh-WAW" but "kuh-NAW", the waters
of dialect smoothing out the word. This is
what you do in economies of scarcity:
we sometimes swallow syllables
like the last morsel of ramps,
or hide them in the damp bowels
of mountains; you can almost
feel the pressure changing
vowels into diamonds,
precious treasures to be hoarded.

-Benjamin Thorne



Capybara Swim

-Natalie Tankersley

On the portrait in my grandparents' house

I would stare at that intimate moment from the dining room table,
kicking my too-short legs:

the man's withered hands, sprigging with white hairs,
folded over his face and shielded him from the light

that fell, gentle and yellow, on his scalp's thinning hair
from the tall candlestick's narrow flame

there was a worn book with tiny, faded print on the table,
over which the man bowed with slumped shoulders;

with awe and mild confusion, mesmerized by the man
caught in a holy moment—in which I, too, was snagged—

I was finally overcome one day, and I finally asked
“What's he doin'?”

My grandfather, grinning, chuckled,
“He's keepin' the flies outta his eyes”

(Lord knows—these days
I've got way too many flies in my face...)

-Sarah Watkins

Ornithomancy

Ravens swarm in odd formations above.
A grim message for an oracle's eye
To tell me the fate of a dying love.

One would have hoped to look up to see doves,
But they are not the birds above who fly.
Ravens swarm in odd formations above.

I hope and I pray she not pass hereof,
But the Ravens come bearing news and try
To tell me the fate of a dying love.

Doctors surrender, removing their gloves.
As they leave her on the table to die,
Ravens swarm in odd formations above.

I run frantic through the crowds, I push and shove,
And the surgeon stops me with eyes so dry
To tell me the fate of a dying love.

Now I lay out in a field of foxglove
Looking up to a maroon speckled sky.
Ravens swarm in odd formations above
To tell me the fate of a dying love.

-Dyland Murray

Lot's Wife

"But Lot's Wife looked back, and she became a pillar of salt." -
Genesis 19:26

Crystalized by judgement fire
she is a monument of indecision
and discontent

appalled that she would dare disobey the Lord's command
spoken from an angel's lips
flee, and do not look back

yet- I also have looked back with longing
on what God has delivered me from
even as I knew if I lingered any longer
it would destroy me

-Isabel Bryan



Turkey

-Betty Poussin

Step on a Crack

A flower grows between the sidewalk squares
A single daisy stands tall and frail
I linger in front of the weed
Raising my foot and stomp the daisy
The worry of breaking my mother's back
No longer valid
Why should this flower stand and not my mom
Gently grabbing the squished flower
After a long walk to my parents
The daisy can now decay
Above my disintegrating mother

-Shelby Dobson



caught in a web
-Alicyn Harris

Water and Stone

She said it was like squeezing water from a stone; I must agree.

I have held that very stone in water. Watched the last bubbles of oxygen escape from the cracks.

I've witnessed it suck up as much as it can before taking it out to watch it dry.

I know that eventually, water evaporates and yet I cannot wring you out.

I cannot feel the moisture on my hands. I cannot see the droplets condense on your skin and leave your body. I could do this over and over, and I have.

I know you will dry out, and you'd never show me how. I'd have to break you open to understand your geology, and I tried.

In my trying, I split myself open. Now, staring at my own matter, I wonder if your insides are as porous as mine.

If inside of you there is silica, olivine, vesicles, and serpentine.
If you hold water the way I hold my tears when I think of you.

-Megan Samsel



Circle of Life

-Isabel Bryan

The Thief

| watch eyes meet and hands hold, and I have been stolen from. Music, laughs, and meals are shared. Forks clink against ceramic dishes, and the joy in this home is not my own. Soon enough, my chest begins to burn, and I Know what it is. The force that drives a man mad. The storm that has no end in sight. The poison that creeps into the corners of your being. It slides up the walls and leaves its residue on doorknobs and windowsills. It places its ink-stained thumb over you and blots you off of the map. It kills and it destroys, yet it isn't the devil himself. It is discontented, coveting, unsatisfied. The joy in this household will never be my own. I am stuck to the walls and door handles. What feels like molasses slides through my fingertips, and before I can grasp the source of that joy, it has passed me by.

-Taliyah Ford



He Cares for Me
-Isabel Bryan

The Moustral

They say birds sing nature's most beautiful melodies,
And I can't blame people for believing this is true,
But I would argue one of the greatest tragedies
Is our inability to hear every tune.

Did you know that mice make music when they are in love?
They weave together intricate melodies and songs
That may rival the beautiful music of the doves,
Their prose and their love both built to stand forever strong.

I imagine he sings ballads about her whiskers
And writes sonnets about her beautiful coat and nose,
And when she's gone he laments of how he lost her
To owls or tom-cats or something worthy of prose.

One must wonder what poetic squeaks mice sing and coo,
And if nature's envy is why they're often made food.

-Dyland Murray



Lazy Cats

*-Natalie
Tankersley*

Horizon

The world runs like the minute hand of a clock,
moving so slowly that I cannot see it. I push my hair
out of my face, and it is still September, the year
not yet brown. I have been waiting for winter
all year. I have waited for my wedding since I was a little girl.
Only a few seconds have passed since then—I have still not
written a book, become a mother. At least it means my hair is still brown.

The world runs like the minute hand of a clock—
it forces me to move sixty times faster to keep up with it. I turn my head
and get whiplash, wishing I had four more sets of eyes. I wake up,
ready for the week, but I blink and then it is Friday. My inbox is a jumble
of unreads, paperwork with deadlines pressing ever closer; my tote bag
bursts with books, and it leaves red marks in my shoulder as I catch my breath
at the top of the hill. I have outrun the clock for now, but it is all I can do.

The world runs like the minute hand of a clock:
it draws a steady circle bordering my movements. I tilt my face towards the sky,
and see birds flying south, bare branches, new blossoms, circling over me.
There is another year, month, sunrise. Nothing is ever over—things just shift
around and around, tracing the pattern of earth and time, life follows death follows life.
It all slips around, like fat pink beads on handmade bracelets; bracelets I have left behind
long ago, bracelets my someday daughter will make for her thin wrists.

-Caroline Minucci

Pink

My world was pink for about 8 weeks
Although I only knew for two.
It was all so much, I had to adjust
To the reality that was you.

My heart swelled, I was overwhelmed
I didn't know what to do.
My body was changing, my brain rearranging
My priorities were all new.

I took so many tests, needed a lot of rest
As your little body grew.
Your gigi screamed, it felt like a dream
Soon everybody knew.

I woke up on Sunday, blood running down my leg
I got in the shower and prayed.
Dressed up, went to church, tried to push through the hurt
Smiling to mask my dismay.

The clots came fast. Your tiny body passed.
The tears hit my hands like rain.
The doctor was brusque. My spirit was crushed.
To keep you I would have done anything.

There is no closure in grieving
what you never got to know.
Composing nightmares and daydreams
My brain won't let you go.

I'm surrounded by pregnancy
Holding only the memory
That for a moment—
My world was pink.

-Emalyn George

Conjuration

Conducting is like witchcraft,
Only somewhat less nefarious:
Its ways no less mysterious;
Its trade no less precarious.

In place of newt or loathsome draught
Mixed in a cauldron with delight
To concoct a brew delirious
That may ensorcell or benight,

Voices, instead, are what I stir.
A dash of bass for flavor strong,
Soprano, alto, for the spice,
A pinch of tenor for the song.

One's casting hand moves as a blur
To conjure up the orchestra.
Simple and triple: hand bobs thrice.
New sounds swirl in the formula.

Circe of old turned men to pigs;
The Wyrd Sisters prognosticate.
And though I neither transmute flesh
Nor pluck gossamer threads of fate,

I turn stale air to lively jigs.
I summon, silence, at a whim.
I fascinate, draw in, refresh
With tunetold tales of stories Grimm.

Conducting is like witchcraft:
A conjuring of notes various
To form fables ethereal
And lend crowds life vicarious.

-Lucas Durand